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LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Can We Stop World War?

IVOR MONTAGU

Harry Pollitt

on THE BRIGHTON T.U.C.

October 1950

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, . . . TO SEE THE WORLD'

IN the past two months in this office we have seen many unmistakable signs of the new mood arising in the British Labour Movement. There is the rising circulation curve in defiance of the normal drop for all periodicals during holiday months. And, above all, there is the number and quality of the letters from old and new readers, young people and veterans. Take the 23-year-old merchant seaman who wrote describing the brief glimpses of the Far East he had seen in his runs; of Chiang Kai-shek's planes firing on British merchantmen; the strength of the liberation movement in the Philippines, now swarming with Yankee troops; the placards in Malaya offering $10,000 for partisan leaders, 'dead or alive'. Perhaps he joined the Navy 'to see the world'. He is certainly using his eyes 'to see the world' in a different and far deeper way than that of the phoney promises of the recruiting poster. From another angle a veteran writes: 'I suppose I shall never see the end of the struggle, but I am beginning to see a new world in which mankind is united to wrest from Nature her secrets for the benefit of all. We older ones must resist the temptation of sitting back "to give the young 'uns a chance", or while they are still no more than school children, their chance is most likely to be an early grave as cannon fodder for vested interests. *Labour Monthly* is always a tonic. Foremost in the fight for socialism—and that means in the fight for peace—is a proud claim, but I think you can justly make it'.

Among many new readers are the very best kind—those active in the Labour Movement: co-operators, Labour councillors, the trade unionist who bought it in his factory, or found it on sale outside his trades council meeting. From Herts: 'I took out a subscription early this week. Here's £1 for 20 more September copies to pass round'. Again: 'S. O. Davies' article says just what we think in our D.L.P.' From Wembley: 'I've just seen it for the first time, in our Public Library. I'm deeply impressed—and appalled'. A Yorkshireman: 'Send me more copies. In view of the state of international affairs and in particular of the aggressive war on Korea, I feel it imperative to keep up to date from the angle of truth'. Again: Palme Dutt's September Notes, *Fifth Column in Britain*, are the finest of all his great writing; they stunned and stirred me'. And finally: 'At all times and in all places L.M. is interesting, informative, invaluable and indispensable. But as the issues become clearer and the struggle intensifies, it becomes all the more directly and immediately usable in the fight for peace and socialism. How many articles, speeches, letters are written with it in one hand! How much the poorer and weaker would be our political life without it! I hope the large sales of *Light on Korea* will mean increased circulation of the Magazine of International Labour'.

DON'T MISS THE IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT INSIDE THE BACK COVER ABOUT D. N. PRITT'S FAMOUS PAMPHLET *LIGHT ON KOREA*.

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Notes of the Month

Choice Before Margate

WHEN the Labour Party Conference delegates meet to discuss the poisonous platitudes of the latest programme 'Labour and the New Society', they will do well to remember the words of Lenin:

> Once we forget the crude and cruel conditions of capitalist domination, all such platforms, all such lists of high-sounding reforms are nothing but empty words which in practice turn out to be either the most pious wishes or simple deception of the masses by ten-a-penny bourgeois politicians.

Lenin wrote these words in his article 'Forgetting the Main thing' in May, 1917, when the Kerenskys and Tseretellis were seeking to cover up the mud and blood of imperialist war with high-sounding phrases of roseate promises for the future. These words are more appropriate than ever today, when the pink frills of an empty, vague and deceptive programme are being thrown round the chains of servility to Wall Street to cover up the real programme—the Programme of War.

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Election and War

Whether or not a future election is being planned over the grand issue of the Steel Corporation to divert attention from the rearmament programme, and stage a shadow battle between Right-Wing Labour and Toryism, the calculations behind such a proposed manœuvre are unmistakable. The bombastic fury of Toryism to denounce this 'rupture of national unity' and 'assault on the citadel of capitalism' (actually, closer unification of the State and the Steel Monopoly) was not reflected in the movement of steel shares on the market:

> It may seem odd that *the prices of steel shares were marked up sharply on the news that the Government had decided to go on with the nationalisation of the steel industry*. . . But the shares of iron and steel companies are still quoted well below their fixed takeover prices under the Steel Act, and *if the State takes over, holders will have a small but tax-free capital profit*. (*Manchester Guardian*, September 15.)

Happy speculators on the swings and roundabouts! Either Toryism succeeds in exploiting the issue to seek to make a comeback and take over the direct reins (with the possibility of eventual coalition) to carry through the war programme. Or, if this sortie fails, the 'ruin' of steel 'nationalisation' will ensure fat profits, while the war programme is still carried through. In either case the real choice of war or peace is hidden from the electorate—if the party managers have their way.

Into the War Trap

With shameless cynicism the *Observer* editorial on September 17 gave the game away:

> Why did Mr. Attlee take this highly controversial step? *He may well have been finally influenced by certain features of the defence debate*. For some time it has been clear that quite a few Labour M.P.s, besides the small minority of outright Pacifists, are uneasy about the Government's armament policy.

The Arms Debate took place on September 12-14, and revealed the unity of the two Front Benches on the war policy. In Mr. Churchill's words:

> The Opposition were in full accord with the Labour Party in their resistance to Communism in all its manifestations. They could, indeed, hardly compete with the Prime Minister in the language which he used on this subject.

On September 14, the decisive day of the Arms vote, the composi-

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tion of the Steel Board was announced to revive the fires of controversy in a new quarter. The absence of a division in parliament on the arms programme and two years' conscription was no measure of the rising volume of disquiet and opposition in the Labour movement throughout the country. How to deflect this tide of opposition from endangering the war policy? The answer was—Steel. As the *Observer* editorial continued:

> Dissension in the Labour Party would be bad for the nation at the present time. It is very desirable that the Government in office should have a united party behind it in carrying through rearmament, and particularly in dealing with the wage problems which are now becoming acute.

The manœuvre is transparent, and it is no less significant that it should be explained with sympathetic understanding by the organ of Toryism.

Offensive Against the Left

It is therefore not surprising that this phony gesture of 'appeasement' to the 'Left' (in the Bevan-*Tribune* sense) should be accompanied by the most violent intensified offensive against the militant Left, against the workers on strike, against the trade union majority who dared to reject the Government's policy of cutting real wages, against the peace movement and against the Communist Party. The path of Hitlerism abroad inevitably leads to the path to Hitlerism at home. War on Marxism, war on Communism is the classic slogan in the name of which the undermining of democracy begins. If the mantle of the Anti-Comintern Pact, of Hitler and Mussolini and Hirohito, of the Holy Crusade against the Soviet Union and World Communism, is now assumed by their latest disciples, the MacArthurs, Trumans and Attlees, mouthing the same slogans and the same formulas ('Western Civilisation' against 'Soviet Slavery'; 'Marxism the Enemy'; 'Communism the Enemy'; 'Iron Curtain'; 'Bandits and Terrorists'—all lifted from the Nazi and Japanese arsenal); if the entire economic and political life of the country is geared to colossal rearmament for such a Holy War; then only a political innocent could fail to understand that such a foreign policy must have decisive influence at home, not only in economy, with limitless burdens and sacrifices imposed on the people and stopping of social progress, but also in home political life, with the extending assault on democratic and working class rights.

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The Enemy At Home

Hitler could never have come to power in Germany if the Brauns and the Severings had not prepared the way with their bannings of the Workers' May Day, their police offensive on Communism, their alliance with the German militarists, their backing of Hindenburg, their Emergency Decrees, and their Black Circular disruption of trade union democracy and working class solidarity. Where that path led the record of Germany has shown for all time. Today the signals of warning are sounding anew for the Western world. We have seen in the United States the enthronement of the F.B.I., the Pentagon and the Un-American Committee; the mass trials of the leaders of the working class and imprisonment of the lawyers who dared to defend them; the witch-hunt, the inquisition and thought-control; the racial murder of Negroes; and the new all-embracing Suppression Bills of the type of the Mundt-Nixon Bill and McCarran Bill, preparing the way for similar legislation proposed by the Administration. Australia under Menzies has followed in the American orbit with its Anti-Communist Law. South Africa under Malan has openly proclaimed the aims of Nazism with its Anti-Communist Law and racial segregation. Now the clamour is rising in Britain.

On Guard

Only the beginnings are here yet. But the beginnings are ugly. We have seen the banning of May Day, the troops in the docks, the legal threats against strikers, the police protection of fascism, the purges of militants, the Black Circular in the unions. The foul language of pogrom incitement of the lowest anti-working class gutter press, the language of 'Red plots' and 'conspiracies', is now repeated in the mouths of Labour Ministers. The *Daily Herald* boasts of the Labour Government's secret police, of its spies and agents in the working class. Mr. Attlee seeks to make political capital out of a Portsmouth explosion to turn it into a Reichstag Fire —without even the pretence of a Van der Lubbe. Mr. Isaacs seeks to cover up his own failures as Minister of Labour by dark accusations of Orders from Warsaw. Mr. Deakin, smarting from the discontent of his own members, and defeated at Brighton by the vote of the majority of British trade unionists who rejected his wage policy, yells for the suppression of the Communist Party and of the *Daily Worker*. The Secretary of the Seamen's Union uses the pages of his union journal to demand 'Death' for 'Traitors'. Let

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us remind these gentlemen that it was the Blums and the Serols, with their Death Decree for Communists at the beginning of the last war, who prepared the fall of France and the victory of Vichy fascism. This was the path of French Social Democracy to the victory of Pétain. This was the path of German Social Democracy to the victory of Hitler.

From Weimar to Nuremburg

It is not the Social Democratic leaders, however much they may win the exultant plaudits of reaction when they so freely let loose the anti-Communist compaign, who will find themselves remaining its leaders at the end. Many end as its victims. It is their own movement and their own organisations that they destroy. Is the memory of MacDonald, Snowden and Thomas, of the Zinoviev forgery let loose by MacDonald that prepared a Tory electoral victory and five grim years of Baldwinism, of the 1931 stab in the back that ushered in fourteen years of Tory rule and Hitler's war, so soon forgotten? It is the Tory leader Anthony Eden who acclaims Isaacs' statement with unconcealed triumph as ' the gravest statement made to parliament in recent years in times of peace '. It is Menzies in Australia who takes advantage of the Labour Government's anti-Communism to end its fifteen years' rule and usher in a Tory victory for the offensive against the working class. It is Malan in South Africa who leads the anti-Communist campaign and the open drive to fascism. It is Churchill and Woolton who publicly jubilate over the Labour Government's anti-Communism and disruption of the working class, and joyfully sniff the prospects of Tory electoral victory. The German trade union leaders who, in the fury of their anti-Communism, purged the unions of the militants, prepared the victory of Hitler and the destruction of the trade union movement; and when, after the victory of Hitler they sought to bow the knee to him and proclaim their undying loyalty, found themselves purged and cast aside with contempt. The lesson is written in blood. That path must never be trodden again. The entire Labour and trade union movement, irrespective of political opinion, will need to heed the warning before it is too late.

War Frenzy at Brighton

The tide of reaction in Western Europe and America is the accompaniment of the drive to war. The two are counterparts of a single whole. War frenzy dominated the utterances of the platform

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at the Brighton Trades Union Congress—no longer rational argument, or even the pretence of rational argument, to meet the starkly serious facts set out by such a spokesman as the representative of the Association of Scientific Workers; but howling, thumping, raving war frenzy and cynical glorification of the atom bomb. Intoxicated to insanity by their hatred of Communism, these blind leaders of the Right jubilantly imagined that they were voting the destruction of Communism when they voted for the justification of the atom bomb (against even the mild proposal to renew negotiations for its banning) and the American military occupation of Britain. They did not realise they were voting for the destruction of Britain. Nevertheless, in face of the deluge two millions voted for the banning of the atom bomb. The same delegates who voted in a majority for the aggressive rearmament programme also voted in a majority against the wage policy which was presented in the name of the requirements of rearmament. Between these two policies the choice will have to be made. One or the other must prevail. Economics cannot be separated from politics in a sealed-off compartment. The final choice will have to be a conscious political choice—the rejection of the war policy. Either peace and social advance. Or rearmament, reaction and war. Either Guns or Butter. The Labour movement cannot continue indefinitely with split mind.

War Frenzy at Westminster—and at Margate?

War frenzy dominated the speeches of the arms debate in parliament—with the exception of one or two courageous spokesmen on the Labour benches, and the rare realist honesty of Lord Hinchingbrooke from the Conservative side (the first significant indication of national awakening and patriotism on the Right). It may be anticipated that the same war frenzy will be poured out from the platform of the Labour Party Conference at Margate in the hope to drown opposition. The same leaders who in the critical years of the 'thirties, when it was necessary to stand up to the aggression of fascism, were all for non-intervention and pacifism and the equality of rights of Nazi Germany and godspeed for Munich, now, when the aggression comes from the new Axis of the Anglo-American Bloc, are all for hounding it on, stirring up bellicose passions and speeding the arms race. There is no inconsistency. They pretend that they have learned the lesson of failure to stand up to aggression in time. On the contrary. They put the brakes on resistance to aggression then, because the common stand which could have prevented

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the war would have meant a common stand with Communism and the Soviet Union, and their hatred of Communism and the Soviet Union blinded them to the true interests of Britain. They are hounding on the aggression today, because the same hatred of Communism and the Soviet Union is blinding them in even more deadly fashion to the true interests of Britain. They were remote from the true feeling of the people then. They are no less remote today, despite all the blazoning of the high-powered press in the service of the American overlords. The British people do not want war. They do not love the American military occupation of their country. They do not worship the American atom bomb or regard it as their saviour. Lies are being poured out without limit to seek to hound them to aggressive war in the name of ' defence '. Bellicose passions and incitement are poor counsellors. It is time that the Labour movement should face the true choice, the choice of peace or war, before it is too late.

Force or Money

Mr. Attlee and Mr. Churchill are of the opinion that the British people can only be induced to fight for the war which they are planning by two incentives—force or money. That is the plain, stark meaning of the new arms measures voted by parliament. Recruiting has collapsed. The British people are voting with their feet, more eloquently than in all the electoral swindles, against the wars of aggression in Malaya and the Far East. The answer? Raise army pay. £70 million for higher pay for the armed forces. Resolute resistance to higher pay for civilian work. Man-power is short? Extend conscription of the youth of the country for two years. Force or money. These are the incentives deemed suitable by the Attlees and the Churchills to induce the people to fight their kind of war. Are the British people lacking in patriotism? Would they fail to rally in their millions to the forces if there really were a question of true defence against aggression—so that conscription would become the democratic means of apportioning of service instead of the violent compulsion of young workers to die in the jungles of Malaya for the profits of rubber and tin magnates? But here there is no question of defence. The Malayans are not invading Britain. The Koreans are not invading Britain. It is their countries that are being invaded. This is aggressive war. This is imperialist war. The means are chosen to meet the end.

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Imperialist War and People's War

Contrast the flood of volunteers to the Korean People's Army. 800,000 volunteers in the North. 400,000 volunteers in the South. Did they require to be bribed with offers of higher pay? They were offered nothing but hardships and shortage; pain and privation beyond the limits of human endurance; no comfortable airlifts for the wounded; even their hospitals bombed to destruction; the limitless atrocities of a barbarous and sadistic enemy. But they are fighting for their country, for their freedom. The American sergeant might bellow to his men, as recorded in the first days of the war: 'Get into it, you high-priced bastards; this is what you are paid for'. That is imperialist war. The old American coalminer whose son was the first to be killed might be besieged in vain by the newspapermen, as recorded in *Time*:

> It was the newspapermen from out of town who asked the fancy question: What was Kenny fighting for?
>
> 'Against some kind of Government', said Theodore Shadrick (his father) simply.
>
> Where was Korea? He didn't know—out there somewhere, where his boy had been killed.

That is imperialist war. The first British lad, a nineteen-year conscript, to be killed might write in his last letter that he was going to Korea to fight 'to show who is master'. That is imperialist war.

Fighting—For What?

The *New York Times* correspondent, Richard Johnston, had to record on August 13:

'The average G.I. doesn't seem to know why he's fighting in Korea'. That is imperialist war. The *Sunday Times* correspondent, Richard Hughes, recorded on September 10:

> Nor is there any real soul to this war. . . The soldiers of the United States and Britain notoriously have little abstract opinion or articulate comment on why they are fighting, but they can usually detect in any war a menace to their country or to their home. As they profanely insist, they can perceive nothing of that sort in this war.

That is imperialist war. The same correspondent had to record:

> The American and Australian air forces can do everything to the enemy but stop him. The tenacity and endurance of the Communist troops under ruthless, systematic aerial attack—rockets, high explosives, low-level strafing—have been astonishing. They have not yet faltered under this concentrated and unopposed ordeal from the sky.

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That is a People's War. In the words of Kim Ir Sen in July:

> The troops of our army are fighting, not for dollars, and not in order to subjugate other peoples, as the American hired murderers are doing, but in order to defend their motherland, to defend the freedom and independence of their people. Our fighters are imbued with the spirit of patriotism, heroism and courage. The troops of the American aggressors are fighting on foreign territory. Our People's Army, enjoying the love, concern and support of all the people, is fighting on the territory of its motherland. Our heroic youth are voluntarily flocking to the People's Army, and the number of volunteers has exceeded 500,000. (The number has since reached 1,200,000.)

That is the difference between Imperialist War and a People's War. That is why the criminal war aims of the Trumans and the Churchills, the Attlees and the Bevins, will in the end never prevail. But it is for the British Labour movement and the British people to stop the aggression before it has gone further, before it engulfs the world in war.

Margate and After

The voice of opposition at Margate—or of such opposition as is able to get through the close-mesh sieve of filleted representation—may be overborne by the clanking of the official machine. The organised workers of Britain who pay are not allowed freedom to send the delegates of their choice to the conference which is to determine the policies that will be carried out in their name. But that opposition, not only at Margate, but throughout the country, will have to carry forward the fight for the soul of the Labour movement, for the future of Britain, for peace. Only that fight can check the tide of reaction in Britain. Only that fight can end the reckless race to war.

September 19, 1950. R.P.D.

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THE BRIGHTON T.U.C.

HARRY POLLITT

I NEVER attend a Trades Union Congress without wishing it was being held in some great industrial centre, so that the lads from the factories could watch its proceedings, see what kind of leaders they have, how their money is spent and to what purpose. There were many visitors at Brighton who had come along to listen, who thought they would like to see the leadership of the workers tackle the things that they and their families are so worried about. The wages issue and the rise in the cost of living; the way we seem to have got completely under the thumb of the U.S.A.; the wars in Malaya and Korea; the atom bomb, rearmament, the lengthening of the conscription period; the cuts in schools, houses and hospitals.

Was any lead of a working-class character on all these problems given by the General Council? Were the rank and file delegates—among them many of the cream of the movement—encouraged to put their ideas forward on them? Did the General Council try to get a sense of urgency and responsibility as to what should be done to fight the employers and war-makers? Did it in any way even reflect the concern of the lads in the workshops at the situation Britain finds itself in, speak for them, make their voices and demands heard—which is after all what these leaders are so highly paid to do?

They did none of these things, and had not the slightest intention of doing so. The Brighton T.U.C. was organised and led by people who might have been envied by those who have to organise the annual conferences of the Economic or Primrose League. It was led by frightened and hysterical leaders, terrified at the results of their own past policies and desperately seeking alibis to prevent this from becoming more widely understood. It was led by trade union leaders for whom exploitation and capitalists no longer exist, for whom rent, interest and profit have no meaning, and who from the start to the close of the Congress uttered no single word against the employers or capitalism.

Not that these leaders have no words to utter, or nothing for them to vent their hatred and anger against. They have. When they spoke they trembled with uncontrolled hysteria, their voices shook the very Dome they were in; but all this was against Communism and

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the Communist Party. As I watched Deakin going through his strip-tease act in defence of capitalism, I couldn't help thinking of Ben Tillett, when during a dockers' strike in London he publicly prayed to God ' to strike Lord Davenport dead '. That was the class spirit which enabled the trade unions to develop in the fight against capitalism. The spirit of Brighton is meant—if the General Council has its way—to make the trade unions lead the employers' fight against Socialism.

What was the trick worked at Brighton in the Presidential address of Mr. Bullock, the speeches of Attlee and Tewson? It was this line of talk: ' We have had five difficult years. We have made sacrifices. We had just turned the corner and great gains were going to be obtained, but now, because of the policy of the Soviet Union, we have had to increase our expenditure on defence, take part in a war in Malaya and Korea, and abandon our social plans for the future through having to adopt a great programme of rearmament '. Now, is that picture even remotely true? It is not. Britain is on the verge of a new world war, and if that does not take place, of an economic crisis. If such a war did take place the economic crisis would be even greater precisely because the Labour Government in its hatred of Communism decided to ally itself with the most brutal and aggressive power the world has even known—the U.S.A. —and refuse an alliance with the greatest, most constructive and peace-loving socialist power the world has ever known—the U.S.S.R. It is through that alliance that Britain has been forced into pacts like the Brussels Agreement, Atlantic Pact, into rearmament, into the war in Korea today and Formosa tomorrow. In the meantime, the U.S.A. refuses to lower its prohibitive tariffs; steals Britain's colonial markets; re-equips Western Germany and Japan; brings forward through its French stooges the Schuman Plan and Council of Europe.

Even at the Brighton T.U.C. there was some glimmering of what U.S. plans in Japan mean for Lancashire. On a resolution protesting against unfair Japanese competition, an important statement was made that received little publicity.

> Mr. Wright (Amalgamated Weavers' Association) said that Lancashire was very concerned about this question. If nothing were done in three or four years there would again be unemployment in all the principal textile towns. The industry itself could do very little to remedy the position. The gap between wages here and in Japan was far too great to be overcome by technological advances. There was a danger that the industrial policy

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being pursued by America in Japan would vitiate the advantages from Marshall Aid. (*The Times*, 7.9.50.)

The same concern was being strongly felt by workers and employers alike about Western German competition. But the Right-Wing leaders of the General Council are not concerned with facing these realities; they can think of nothing but their manufactured bogies of Communism. They talk about 'moral values'. But they are experts at making black appear white. Immediately after the T.U.C. in September, 1949, the U.S.A. forced Britain to devalue the pound sterling, which Cripps had declared again and again with the full support of the Government and T.U.C. would take place only over his dead body.

Yet the President of the Brighton T.U.C. has the audacity to declare:

> The Chancellor of the Exchequer had to take the serious step of devaluing sterling. This very necessary but hazardous action has so far accomplished a desirable purpose.

And that apostle of *morality*, Attlee, went further and stated to the T.U.C.:

> The distasteful, but necessary, devaluation of the pound sterling was having the result which we anticipated in promoting our economic recovery.

And these people dare to talk about 'Communists turning somersaults'. What they didn't dare tell the Congress delegates was that the startling rise in the cost of living since devaluation took place as the result of a policy forced on Britain by Wall Street and not the Kremlin. The real scandal about devaluation, however, is that these experts in 'morality and spiritual values' knew last September (1949) they were going to devalue the pound, and they swindled the Trades Union Congress into supporting the wage-freeze policy on the ground that prices were going to come down, when all the time they knew that prices were going to go up and up. They dare to talk about 'Communists being the agents of a foreign power'. But history has no precedent for an alleged great Power like Britain so abjectly and slavishly carrying out the orders of a greater Power like the U.S.A. in the hope of halting the rising tide of the fight for national liberation, independence, peace and socialism.

But no matter how well the lickspittles of capitalism try to serve their masters, immediately they fail to pull it off, then the guys who pull the strings, to which the Right-Wing leaders so willingly dance, let go. Consider, for example, what the Press said after the voting on the wage freeze:

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Had the psychological atmosphere in the Congress Hall been rather different, had the Council's case been better presented, the voting might have been different, might easily have gone the other way. (*News Chronicle*, 8.9.50.)

Has the General Council of the T.U.C. ever before received so sharp and open a rebuff as it was given during yesterday's eventful proceedings? . . . Frankly the General Council, in our view, took the whole matter of opposition to wage-restraint far too casually. Because dislike for a continuation of wage-restraint is being loudly exploited by the Communists, and because the Communists are known to be a noisy minority within the trade union movement, the General Council thought that its own advocacy of wage-restraint was enough to carry the day. (*Evening News*, 8.9.50.)

The more one thinks of this Conference the more imperative does it seem that there should be a thorough reorganisation at Transport House. (*The Observer*, 10.9.50.)

Behind the slick phrases of Attlee about rearmament lies the future intention of a gigantic speed-up in the factories; the attempt to force the workers to give up customs and practices which are a safeguard for their wages and jobs; the direction and transference of labour; longer hours—all of which will be accompanied by higher prices, higher profits, shortages of essential commodities; drastic curtailment of essential social services and building of new houses. This is one price to be paid for the politics of the Labour Government and the General Council, in tying Britain to the war chariot of American imperialism.

But there is another price also to be paid, if the policy of the Labour Government, supported by the General Council, lands Britain in a third world war. It is the danger of being completely obliterated through atomic warfare. No country in the world is so vulnerable as ours, no country and no peoples would suffer more than ours if ever atomic war breaks out. And yet the Tewsons and Williamsons go blue in the face begging Congress not to demand the abolition of the atom bomb. They gloat that it is in the possession of the Americans. They even have the heartlessness to advance arguments trying to prove that there is no difference between being killed by atom bombs and rockets. Are these Right-Wing leaders of our Trade Union movement quite prepared to see millions of the civil population, men, women and children, die the most frightful and agonising deaths; generations unborn have to bear on their bodies and in their characteristics the effects of atom bombing? Are they prepared to see cities totally destroyed and this island made un-

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inhabitable for years and years, and all in their hatred of Communism and the Soviet Union? If so, these men are a cruel menace to the Trade Union movement, and the sooner they are sent packing the better for all concerned.

A lot was said by Deakin, Tewson and Attlee at Brighton about democracy, and it is high time that this issue was raised sharply in the factories and trade union branches. For those passionate exponents of ' British Democracy ', who are always contrasting it with the ' undemocratic ' Soviet Union, are those who deny any vestige of democracy in their own trade unions. They are also those who shout the loudest that the Communists want economic chaos and worsened conditions so as to have better opportunity to advance their policy. But it is a striking fact that in those unions where the influence of the Communists is strongest the workers have the highest wages, best workshop organisation and most democracy in the conduct of their Trade Union affairs. Since the advent of a Labour Government, more and more of the time of Trade Union conferences each year is being given over to representatives of the Government and to leaders whose speeches are in defence of the Government. This is also the case with the Trades Union Congress. The opportunities for delegates from the job expressing their point of view gets less year by year. But for the reactionary ' fraternal delegates ' from America and Canada, for Government representatives, and for what are termed ' speakers who will lead in ' for the General Council, more and more time is being given. Further, how can any sincere democrat justify a position where on the Sunday night before the Trades Union Congress opens on Monday, you know what the result of the voting on all the important issues will be, because it has been decided in separate delegations meetings of all the principal Trade Unions? And this before a single word has been said in support, or opposition to, the resolution on the agenda, or the policy statements of the General Council. This represents sectionalism in its worst possible form, the negation of a truly democratic and working class way of discussing and arriving at decisions, and it makes the Congress itself a huge waste of time and money that only benefits a seaside resort, and would be better spent in organising the unorganised workers.

There is another aspect of democratic procedure which is worth drawing attention to. When the delegates of the various Trade Unions are elected they are being elected as delegates to the Trades Union Congress, and not to represent individual Trade Unions. The

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Standing Orders of Congress provide that every delegate has the right to take part in the Congress proceedings. The practice is now growing up that unless a delegate is speaking in support of the sectional decisions of his union delegation, he is not allowed to speak. This means that in practice minority opinions cannot be heard, and an entirely false position is given of the actual relation of forces and opinions. The minority who fought so hard at Congress, both in their delegation and on the floor of Congress, can be justly proud of the fight they put up in a very difficult situation. What they fought for will win out. It has taken three years of hard fighting to get the wage freeze policy finally defeated. Those who have led this fight have been subjected to every form of abuse from the Right-Wing leaders of the General Council. Let us hope that it is not going to take three years for the masses to realise that these delegates are also right in their struggle against the policy being adopted on Korea and the Atom Bomb.

Every worker knows how Deakin has sided with the Government and the employers in his support of wage freezing. The workers at the Trades Union Congress have found that his policy is a wrong one. They will soon find that out also in relation to his policy on Korea. Of course there is an apparent contradiction on the voting on the wage freeze resolution and the voting on the Korea resolution. It arises because there is still far too little political discussion inside the factories and trade union branches—still far too much concentration on what are called 'the immediate practical things', and not sufficient understanding that it is from the political situation and policies adopted to meet it, that all 'the immediate practical things' arise. It is this which leads to setbacks and defeats for the workers. True they are always learning in the school of bitter experience, but there will be far less suffering and anxiety when there is a greater readiness to discuss every question also from a political standpoint. If the political issues of the day had been as seriously discussed in the factories and trade union branches as the General Council's policy on the wage freeze and equal pay for equal work had been, the General Council at Brighton would have been defeated in the same way as they were on these two decisive issues. As the Labour Government's policy supported by the Right-Wing leaders of the General Council of the T.U.C. lands the working class into even more serious times than we experience now, it will yet be understood that it is from the political situation that every problem arises. The trade union leaders who are foremost in de-

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nouncing politics in the unions, have themselves shown the example to the workers. They judge everything from a political standpoint, the reactionary standpoint of social democracy. They have succeeded in turning the Trades Union Congress into a mere political appendage of the Labour Party and Government.

It will now be a fatal mistake if the militant workers say, 'we won out on ending the wage freeze and in demanding equal pay for equal work', and let it stop at that. Wage increases and equal pay will have to be fought for in the factories and trade union branches, and rest assured the Right-Wing leaders of the General Council will move heaven and earth to prevent this from taking place. Resolutions on paper are one thing, action to secure them is another, and as the workers take action, they will see how these leaders will more and more reveal themselves as the open agents of capitalism, in a way that will make the conduct of those who betrayed the general strike in 1926 look almost like a gentlemanly act.

We are fully aware of all that the Press and the B.B.C. have said about the attacks on the Soviet Union, on Communism, the Communist Party. We understand the speeches of Tewson, Attlee, Williamson and Deakin. We know what is cooking and will face it and defeat it. When the hysterical outbursts of these leaders have been forgotten, the shouting and the tumult dies down, there are hundreds of the Brighton Congress delegates who will ask themselves, 'And where do we go from here?' We Communists have not been defeated. We are neither intimidated nor afraid. We know that the last word has not been said at Brighton. There was a great question mark in the minds of the majority of the delegates who left Brighton. The principal General Council leaders returned from Brighton more worried and frightened than when they went there. The Labour Government cannot be too happy at the result of the handiwork of its stooges and agents. The U.S.A. warmongers cannot either be happy at the strong anti-American feeling that was expressed at the Congress, in the lobbies and hotels.

It was not a united Congress. It was not a Congress that can make the warmongers believe that it is all plain-sailing for them, nor one that can make the profit-makers feel the barometer has been set 'fair' for them. You cannot successfully wage imperialist wars with a Trade Union movement divided in its outlook. You cannot make a success of a rearmament policy that millions of the best, most skilled and politically-minded of the working class have their doubts about. The last word will be spoken, not by the General Council,

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but in the factories and trade union branches. Brighton has only given added proof of the urgency of a great new campaign to rouse the old, fighting trade union spirit, militancy and outlook among the mass of Trade Unionists. Passivity, belief in a false loyalty to false Labour leaders has not brought us any nearer to Socialism, which means prosperity, construction and peace. It has brought us into a situation where splendid British lads who could be carrying forward the fight for Socialism in Britain, who could be building houses, weaving cloth, tilling the soil, forging steel, digging coal, manning the trains and docks, are being maimed and killed, fighting for the profits of British tin and rubber millionaires in Malaya, and for Yankee imperialists in Korea. Their blood is not on our hands. It is on the hands of Attlee, Deakin and Tewson. None of those enjoying a comfortable week at the seaside, who so loudly supported the General Council's policy on Korea, will volunteer to go there.

The Trade Union movement needs Tilletts and Manns, men with flaming tongues to rouse the masses to action before it is too late. It needs the spirit and sacrifice of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the 1889 Dock Strike pioneers, the heroes of the 1926 General Strike and Miners' Lock-out, to inspire the masses to action in defence of wages, full employment on constructive work, our national independence and peace. It needs men and women who will fight for increased wages, equal pay for equal work now, who will defend trade union conditions in the factories, fight against Yankee methods of speed-up and exploitation, recruit the unorganised, unify the Unions, extend nationalisation, and range the Trade Union movement on the side of peace, and not war. It needs fighters against sectionalism and purely craft outlooks; men and women who stand for a greater unification of the trade unions than exists today; men and women whose minds are not set on pelf and place, who won't cringe before a Wall Street millionaire's frown, who will recall our triumphs of the past, and refuse to see them squandered by people who serve the interests of capitalism, because they believe they are better off than they would be under socialism. It needs men and women who hate the rich and love the poor, who believe in Socialism—yes, men and women who want power for the working class, and know that to win this, a united, militant, fighting Trade Union movement against the bosses, against capitalism and against Labour leaders who conspire, disorganise and betray the trade unionists, is a vital necessity. That is the lesson of Brighton—as it will be of Margate.

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FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

THE T.U.C. THEN

THERE is now a growing recognition in the unions that it is not enough to grumble and grouse at the policy pursued by Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Thomas and then leave them to carry on as usual. The experience of the Labour Government has made the unions realise that they must fight on these issues and then force the leaders to carry out the policy that has been decided upon by the whole Movement, and where this is not done, it simply means such leaders must be swept aside.

Harry Pollitt, in *The Scarborough Conference*. October, 1925.

THE FATAL FAR EAST

IF and when Capitalist Imperialism dares a big attack in the Far East, its action there may bring it crashing down here, in the West—and all over the world.

R. Page Arnot, in *The Far Eastern Tangle*. October, 1925.

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CAN WE STOP A THIRD WORLD WAR?

IVOR MONTAGU

HAVE the 'Western' governors decided on war? We may be sure, we, the destined bomb-fodder, would not be told. Sealed-lips Baldwin is succeeded by sly-boots Attlee. When the American long-distance bombers first occupied this country, this gentleman, who often soils the air by explaining to you ad lib. that he does not like Communists because they neglect truth for expediency, swore blue and pink that they were here for 'training purposes'. Now he stays silent at Mr. Churchill's revelation that their purpose always was: to blow up Moscow—in other words, that the Communists were right. This kind of straight dealing between statesman and public is called 'democracy'.

Years ago, the most scathing diatribe extant was delivered against the idea that armaments could do anything but bring war nearer—by Mr. Attlee. Now Mr. Attlee (Washington having whispered him its wishes) presents us with the greatest peace-time arms bill ever—explaining it is intended to prevent war. Has Mr. Attlee changed his views? Or is this only another example of what the *Manchester Guardian* called the 'higher duty' to maintain State intentions secret, when Sir Stafford, swearing he would ne'er devalue, devalued.

The signs are unpropitious.

Years ago (when *they* had the monopoly) there was a fine to-do to convince us that atom bombs hurt people, and might even be dangerous. Now we are assured the contrary by ready civil servants, and the scientists who contradict them are dismissed as amateurs. Years ago, we were told that Communists disrupted peace movements by pointing out that some Americans wanted war. Now to support peace is itself a sign of disruption, and so many and so highly placed are the Americans demanding 'preventive aggression' or predicting how cordially Christ will thank them for murdering Muscovites, that the only patriotism has become the behaviour of the Three Wise Monkeys. It was once a Communist slander when some said the result of all our new safety pacts was to pin Britain to U.S. coat-tails at the U.S. whim. Now a Tory M.P. writes to *The Times* to tell us that it is trivial logic chopping to discuss the

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sovereignty of Formosa; the fact is we are bound to fight alongside America whoever starts a war.

Not so long back, indeed, we were told that only wicked Moscow stood in the way of an agreement to ban atom bombs. Now, to ask that atom bombs be abolished is a sign that you are an agent of Moscow seeking the downfall of democracy, and if you sign a petition suggesting that abolition might be a good thing, this proves that you are a child, an old woman, or cannot read.

Yet peace is no treason.

Chuckle-headed Crossmans may comfort themselves that British Social-democracy rests on the secure foundations of the superior store of American atom bombs. Yet, supposing the store to be in sooth superior, say 400 to 40, what true comfort is there in that? The day after the weapon of mass destruction is launched from this 'unsinkable aircraft carrier', the bread cast upon the Moskva will return as an affliction and would be the end of most of us (however much the little Audreys in California could still find war funny).

It is still true that making peace is better (and cheaper) than preparing for war.

Wherein then lies the peril? It lies in the stubborn adherence of our rulers to a discredited, outmoded and defeated policy, impossible of attainment. It lies in their determination to halt the hands of the clock by force, even to move them back, though the machinery that moves those hands is irresistible.

Korea will be free. Asia will not obey MacArthur. The African is as good as the pinkish-white man. The 'busman and the railwayman (and the 'busman's and railwayman's wives) will not forever put up with a diminishing real value to their pay packets. These things are facts, as certain as the burgeoning of the grass in spring. No amount of calling them Communism will vanquish them or curb their force. Whatever 'containment' is set up will burst asunder, as a stone pavement bursts asunder at the pressure of a seed.

Let this truth and this reality be understood. The trouble with our rulers is that they are so deafened by the whispering of their F.B.I. and M.I.5 and of assassins they buy in the New Democracies, they are so dazzled by the headlines and the *Mirror* picture page, that they cannot see, or hear, the real world. They live in a dreamland beset by plots and sabotage and mystery agents bearing cloak and dagger constructed of their own fears and frustrations. They see themselves as knights of a glorious civilisation whose flowering triumph is to make them comfortable, threatened by despots whose

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citizens are mysteriously at once pitifully exploited and inexplicably loyal. They are hypnotised by the arithmetic of Lake Success, where Cuba counts as much as China and China doesn't count at all, into imagining that they have the strength to enforce their will.

But this is not how the *majority* of the people of the world see it. They see, what our press hides, that the wars are fought by the Americans in Korea, the British in Malaya, the French in Indo-China, the Dutch in Indonesia. They see that it is the 'West' that has huge military bases thousands of miles from anything they have a right to 'defend' and whose soldiery are taught to treat as 'Gooks' men every whit as good as they. They see that the 'human values' vaunted by the Russells, and the Christian principles by which the Fishers justify the preservation of the atom bomb, include Malan's sjamboking farmers, the lynch-mutilators of the Klu Klux Klan, the peon-starvers of South America, Franco, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, Makronesos and the re-employed Gestapo and Kempetai in scarcely dyed uniforms.

They see, if others don't, that the high-principled Truman pretends not to recognise 400 million people in order to appease political rivals more unscrupulous than he. They read, if we are never given the chance, and consequently they know, that Malik at the Security Council has stood for the rule of law, the provisions of the Charter, the return of peace, the hearing of both sides, and that the Americans with their tame performing Jebb, unable to reject the natural justice of all this, have refused it on the sole ground of their desire to try to re-establish their fallen credit by the fear that might be induced by a military victory.

They see, because they can count, in the votes of U.S.A. and its debtor states (Britain, France, Norway, Cuba, Egypt, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Chiang) not a majority, but a tiny minority, compared with the human conscience represented by India, China and the Soviet Union.

They see, because the truth is not hidden from them as it is from the West in the folds of the paper curtains, the Socialist and the on-the-way-to-Socialism family of nations with a standard of living rising like the mercury in an infinitely tall thermometer heated by an enthusasm that is moving mountains.

Korea has illuminated the minds of hundreds of millions like a lightning flash. The limitations of Coca-colonisation stand revealed.

The American power cannot win. It cannot even win the battle, because however many bombs it drops, however many Koreans it slays, the Koreans will never be content, and Asia will never rest, till

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the last traces of a power of such horrors and cruelty and barbarity are effaced. It dare not face China or the Soviet Union. Its most truculent sounding generals, for all their bold words, shiver lest their actions should provoke a rejoinder from the human conscience they know too strong for them. Even the capitalists of the countries they befriended are growing uneasy. What profit, say the bourgeoisie of Italy, of France, in being defended *à la* Korea? A 'defence' that destroys all property hardly appeals to even the native property owner, however attractive it may be to an expatriate financier who, at long distance, can derive profit both from its destruction and its reconstruction. Even in Japan and Germany the masses who tasted the consequences of one aggressive war hesitate to assume the rôle cast for them in the forefront of another. Just as the allies the American invader finds for his peace-time rule narrow down always to the most unscrupulously speculative, the most cruelly corrupt, the revived and 'cleared' torturers and bullies of the fascist past, so for war he can find support only among the adventurers, bullies, conscripts, and the most anti-national of the rich. It is no longer in the power of the imperialist to rule. He can only hurt, pending the inevitable end, which his Protean masks can but delay. How much harm he will do before he goes depends upon the ability of the peace-loving to disillusion those whom he misleads.

The call of Prague to the Second World Peace Congress: banning of atomic weapons, with strict international control; limitation of all armaments, with strict international control; stopping of propaganda for war; condemnation of aggression; condemnation of armed intervention by one people in the affairs of another; support for all peaceful moves to end fighting in Korea; opposition to terror bombing in Korea; settlement of the Korean question by a Security Council that properly includes the five great Powers and hears both sides—*all this represents the desires of the overwhelming majority in every country in the world,* and everybody knows it, including those who oppose it.

War and peace hang by a thread. And the strands of which that thread is composed are the energy, devotion and ability of the peace supporters, striving to reach and fire with hope that immense majority; and the courage and honesty and optimism of simple men and women, who support the measures of peace in their heart of hearts, but whom the fomentors of war seek to render passive by abuse, cynicism and intimidation. The issue is being decided now. What are YOU doing?

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Salute to China

One year ago, on 1st October, 1949, Chairman Mao stood up in Pekin's historic square before The Gate of Heavenly Peace, and read the Proclamation of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

During ten historic days, the 662 delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference had established the Central People's Government and elected the National Committee and their Chairman. They had adopted the basic laws of the New China and the Common Programme which opens with the historic declaration that 'the era of the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism in China' has ended. It continues:*

> *'From the status of the oppressed, the Chinese people has become the master of a new society, and a new State has replaced the feudal, compradore, fascist, dictatorial Kuomintang reactionary rule with the Republic of the People's Democratic Dictatorship'.*

Thirty-two years after the Ten Days That Shook the World and opened a new era in world history, a new Ten Days had marked the accession to the forces of human progress of 475 million Chinese people, a quarter of mankind.

What gains have been made during this historic first year for China, and for peace, socialism and the ending of national oppression throughout the world?

In China, the liberation of virtually the entire Chinese mainland and all Chinese territory except Tibet and Formosa: a tremendous sweep forward in agrarian reform, in industrial reconstruction, in trade union and democratic organisation, in literacy and cultural life.

China stands up, and the largest nation in the world is united and has taken mighty steps forward to full life.

It has been a year in which the status and impact of China dominates all international affairs. On October 2nd, the day after the founding of the Republic, the U.S.S.R. formally recognised the new China. On February 14th, 1950, the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance was signed, which

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A PRESENTATION TO CH

人民政治協商會議上新疆代表向毛主席獻禮

MAN MAO — Huang Chun

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Chairman Mao receives a cloak from the Sinkiang delegation at the historic People's Political Consultative Conference in Peking a year ago when the People's Republic was founded.

(This painting is one of the prints of Chinese pictures and posters belonging to the Britain-China Friendship Association, 17 Bishops Bridge Road, London, W.2, and will form part of a forthcoming Exhibition.)

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guarantees joint measures against the 'violation of peace on the part of Japan or any other state that may collaborate with Japan directly or indirectly in acts of aggression'. It declared the readiness of these two great Powers, representing 675,000,000 people, to co-operate 'in all international actions aimed at ensuring peace and security throughout the world'.

In world affairs, a staggering blow had been dealt to the war plans of aggressive imperialism; a tremendous strengthening of the forces of peace, socialism and progress.

For the colonial peoples struggling for national liberation the inspiration of China on this first anniversary is incalculable. To the most savagely oppressed, poverty-stricken and land-hungry peasants throughout the world, their millions of brother peasants of China have proved that, united with the workers, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and guided by Marxist principles, they have thrown off the shackles of landlordism, feudalism and foreign imperialism for ever. It could be done; it has been done.

On this first anniversary, Formosa is under the aggressive menace of American armed forces. American arms and money maintain the corrupt puppet Chiang Kai-shek on that territory and in usurpation of China's rightful place in the United Nations.

The British Government's support of this aggressive policy against China is a measure of the urgency of the fight for peace in this country. To strengthen that fight is the best tribute that we in Britain can pay to the Chinese people on this their magnificent anniversary.

EDITORIAL BOARD, LABOUR MONTHLY.

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AGGRESSION IN ASIA

ARTHUR CLEGG

THE Korean war is now over three months old, and with every month that passes American provocations multiply and the aims of the American militarists become more clearly expressed. The war was first used to cover the American seizure of Formosa, and the increase of American intervention in Viet Nam and the Philippines, and a tighter blockade of China. Now the Truman administration has gone over to the bombing of Chinese towns and railways and the shooting down of Soviet aircraft. A general of the American Air Force has been sacked for saying what General MacArthur both says and does. But more eminent men who blurt out or openly proclaim the far flung scope and aggressive intent of the American empire are continued in office and sustained in their command. And the Secretary of Navy Matthews can get away with his call to the American Government to take on a 'new character' and become 'the initiator of a war of aggression' because it has already taken on that rôle in Korea; and General MacArthur is only mildly reproved for his demand for the long term retention by America of Formosa because he is voicing the demand of the expansionist forces of his country.

The speech of the Secretary of Navy was made with the prior knowledge of the then Secretary of Defence Johnson; and David Lawrence, a columnist in the *New York Herald Tribune*, has revealed that General MacArthur was only voicing the opinion of members of the U.S. Chiefs of Staff. Previous spokesmen of American expansionism had laid claim to the whole of the Pacific as an 'American ocean'. To enforce this claim many bases have been seized and built. But the pith and purpose of General MacArthur's statement went further. He called for the American domination of all Eastern Asia as well. His demand for Formosa and an island chain extending from the Aleutians to the Mariannas was based not only on his statement that 'From this chain we can . . . prevent any hostile movement into the Pacific'. That was only his second reason. His first reason was that from it 'we can dominate with air power every Asiatic port from Vladivostock to Singapore'. The appetite grows with feeding, and, from control of the Pacific, the American militarists now pass on to the attempted domination of Asia.

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While the General went on to talk of this 'island chain' as a 'line of defence', he had already declared his purpose and given a new cry to his jackals in Congress and elsewhere. It must be noted here that this idea of an imperial line stretching across the Far East from Singapore to Korea is held not only by the General, but also by Mr. Attlee. Speaking to the T.U.C. a fortnight after MacArthur's statement, the British Prime Minister, trying to justify the sending of British troops to Korea under an illegal decision by the rump of the Security Council, said:

> We have been holding an extended line against covert attacks . . . the Communist attack had now taken a more overt form in the invasion of South Korea.

No wonder therefore that the General's statement has been officially greeted with only the mildest reproof.

To make sure that no one should misunderstand the rôle for which the peoples of Asia were cast in this set-up, General MacArthur went on openly to express his contempt for them as people who could only be impressed by the superior might of the master race. 'It is the pattern of Oriental psychology', he said, 'to respect aggressive leadership'. That is to say, as the *Manchester Guardian* commented, 'the leadership of America, provided it is sufficiently aggressive'. Note the presumption that 'Orientals' are a special breed of man, with a special 'psychology'. What could be more revealing of the Hitlerite mentality of American militarists!

The flurry that was caused by the General's statement was not due to the fact that he demanded the retention of Formosa, for on their intention to hold what they have seized there is little disagreement in the ruling circles of the United States. Nor was it because he tore away the draperies with which the State Department is trying to cover the annexation. What caused the flutter was his open stress of Formosa as part of a further expansionist drive which, while it whets the appetites, also stirs the concern of some of those ruling circles—and even more arouses the apprehension of some of America's shaky allies. For the General's statement did not come out of a vacuum. It occurred after his visit to Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa and his promise of 'joint' action with him. And it also followed the visit to Formosa of Wellington Koo, Chiang's 'Ambassador' in Washington, after which, it has been reported, Chiang Kai-shek was much more 'contented' with American policy. The General's declaration has been followed by Chiang Kai-shek's boast that within four years he would be ruling again in Nanking, and the announcement of a new Kuomintang programme. This states that

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the party now stands for such aspects of the 'American way of life' as 'encouragement of private ownership and private investment', and 'We welcome foreign investment'. This programme, the *New York Times* correspondent in Formosa said, is 'the platform upon which it (the Kuomintang) will strive to regain control of the mainland'.

And while General MacArthur and Chiang Kai-shek clearly reveal the plans of American imperialism in Eastern Asia, in India it is made known that the American Government have a scheme to enable Admiral Nimitz ('it would be terrible to stop at the 38th parallel' Nimitz) to take over the government of Kashmir. But just as the Korean war is forcing out into the open various parts of the American aggressive plans, and revealing the utterly reactionary mentality which is behind them, so it is equally exposing the military calculations on which they are based, as 'Centurion' pointed out last month. After the American Air Force had flown 20,000 sorties in two months and the B29's alone had dropped 1,500 tons of bombs, the Tokyo correspondent of the *New York Times* regretfully recorded that 'proponents of air power here have taken a second look at the rôle of air power in modern war and admit that the so-called push-button age has at least not arrived on the Korean battle-front'. These proponents of air power had therefore, said the correspondent, fallen back on the argument that 'long term attrition of the enemy's rear will perhaps prove a decisive factor'.

General MacArthur's attempt to retrieve his declining fortunes and impress the United Nations General Assembly by a new spectacular bid to end the Korean war 'quickly' has yet to come to grief. But while it may demonstrate the amount of destruction the American mechanised power concentrated in great quantities on limited fronts can achieve, it cannot bring about the 'quick victory' which MacArthur professes it will. It can only eventually come to grief as soon as the nature of the fighting puts American concentrated mechanisation at a disadvantage—just as the Japanese concentrated drives in China came to grief.

With the Koreans exploding American military theories one by one, the Soviet and Chinese Governments have carried the struggle for a peaceful settlement of Far Eastern questions a step further in the United Nations. In addition to its own Note to the American Government on the shooting down of an unarmed Soviet plane off Port Arthur, which drew attention to 'the serious consequences which such actions on the part of the American military authorities

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may have', the Soviet Government has secured that the Chinese complaints against American aggression in Taiwan (Formosa) and against the strafing of China from Korea are on the Security Council agenda.

Following the second American raid on China from Korea on August 29, Chou En-lai, the Chinese Foreign Minister, cabled to the Security Council:

> On behalf of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, I hereby make this further accusation through the United Nations and demand that the United Nations Security Council immediately take, on the basis of my protest of August 27, effective measures to stop action on the part of the United States aggressive forces in Korea to enlarge the scale of their aggression, and bring about promptly the withdrawal of the United States aggressive forces from Korea, so that the issue will not assume more serious proportions. I consider it most urgent that these measures be taken without delay.

Thus, in addition to pointing out the possible dangerous consequences of American provocations, the Chinese Note shows that the Chinese Government has gone beyond protesting to the demand that the Security Council take action to halt the American drive to wider war. This demand for action and for the presence of Chinese representatives in the United Nations discussions will continue to be pressed home with vigour, and the subterfuge of the State Department—whether those designed to conceal its aims or those which seek to use Tito to do its dirty work—will all fail. Already by September 11 the majority of the Security Council had voted in favour of the presence of a Chinese representative at the discussions on China's complaints, and America had been revealed as defying the majority in its opposition to elementary justice. The duty of the Security Council to seek a peaceful settlement and halt American attempts to intensify the war is something that cannot be shirked, hidden or evaded.

And while the peace forces and governments continue to press with vigour for the clear and simple aims of a peaceful settlement in Korea and the admission of China to the Security Council, the deep rifts and conflicts in the camp of the war-mongers keep breaking through to the surface. Allowing one ray of realism to pierce the verbal obscurity of its present leading articles, *The Times* writing of 'Korea and Formosa' on August 19 declared:

> The dangers of the situation are apparent, for the Chinese Nationalists have an obvious interest in widening the conflict.

But, seeing the danger, they none the less still refrained from

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demanding the only solution—an American withdrawal. Three weeks later, the fears had spread to America, and the *Washington Post* launched an attack on the Truman administration policy of sending aviation petrol to Chiang Kai-shek in Formosa. And, though, like *The Times*, it still balked at calling for the withdrawal of the American Seventh Fleet, it criticised the recognition of Chiang by America as ' the Government of China '. A few days later still, Premier Nehru of India again and more vigorously insisted on his country's anxiety that China be admitted to its right place in the Security Council.

Diplomatic rifts and fissures, however, will not by themselves bring an end to the dominant American drive to intensify the war. But they do reveal a situation in which the growing demand for a peaceful settlement in Korea can achieve results. We would be doing less than our duty towards the British forces, sent to die in a war in which they see no sense, if we did not now intensify our demands for their withdrawal, and that of all foreign forces, from Korea.

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A GREAT FRENCH NOVEL

F.S.

ARAGON'S novel *Les Communistes** is something of an event, literary and political. It must be the first time that an author in a capitalist country has set out to write a book for working-class readers in the most literal sense: for Aragon not only conceived the novel from the angle of, and for the enjoyment of, his worker comrades, but arranged to have it published in short parts so as to enable them to buy it at a price within their means; and fixed up a meeting where 'all who wish to discuss the book with Aragon' could come and fire questions and criticisms at him, and where he could explain his methods and what he meant to do in the book. This explanation is of considerable interest to the reader. The idea of the book came to him, said Aragon, not as a single unattached volume, but as the continuation and culmination of his series of novels *Le Monde Réel*. The preceding novels, from *Les Cloches de Bâle* to *Aurélien*, were intended 'to give a picture of the French nation in all its complexity', and to illustrate the saying in the Communist Manifesto that a time would come when the best elements of the bourgeoisie would pass to the side of the working class. *Les Communistes* illustrates the period in France when the working class, with these good elements of the bourgeoisie, rose to the leadership of the country, heroes in the front ranks of the battle.

Les Communistes covers the period February, 1939, to January, 1945. The whole is planned in three parts, each part subdivided into numbers appearing at roughly three months' interval. The three numbers which have appeared so far go from February, 1939, to March, 1940, and each centres round the outstanding event or political situation of the period. The first is focused on the Soviet-German pact, the second on the declaration of war and the mobilisation, the third on the persecution of the Communist party and the underground activity ensuing. Having conceived the novel as a whole and later decided to divide it into short parts, Aragon found himself faced with the difficulties that confront a serial writer—only worse, for the intervals between each part are longer than with most serials. Yet, however inadequate a review is bound to be under the

**Les Communistes*, by Aragon. 1,042 pp. La Bibliothèque Française, Paris. 16s. 3d. (3 vols.). Collet's, London.

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circumstances, there is a great deal that one can and must say about the book up to the present.

From the first lines of Vol. 1—the harrowing picture of the arrival of the defeated Spanish republicans on the French frontier—it impresses itself as a work of socialist realism, a true and living picture of our time. It is a good illustration of Aragon's definition of realism to his working-class critics: 'Realism is that kind of art which, taking account of things as they are, and as they appear to be, at the same time catches them in their evolution, in their movement. And Socialist realism is the opposite of photographic naturalism in that it adds to the true picture of things the spirit which animates them, the spirit of progress (which we in our jargon call socialism)'. And to this is added an obviously non-photographic element—emotional, lyrical. One element in a work of Socialist realism is the underlying unity of ideas inherent therein; and this is the strength of *Les Communistes*. Two ideas, counterpoised and interwoven, permeate the book. One is the *impasse* of the bourgeoisie, the hopeless confusion from which they try to escape into their ivory towers of culture, their cocktail parties, their intrigues for political or financial power and privilege; and in contrast the strength and clarity of purpose of the politically conscious workers, who, led by the Communists, follow the road towards their own liberation and that of France.

The nightmare element in the reactionaries' life increases as the situation develops from bad to worse—from the bankruptcy of the government's 'phoney war' policy, to the surrender to Hitler, the panic-stricken rush out of Paris, the occupation of France; while the Communists, never losing their sense of direction and purpose, are proved right every time in their diagnosis and actions—for instance their appeal for negotiations with the U.S.S.R. in 1939, for national unity, for the defence of Paris—even in illegality unfailingly pointing the right way for the people.

André Wurmser says: 'If Aragon describes 1939, treachery and stupidity in power, the anti-working-class hatred, the Communists' heroism and clarity of vision, this is not in order to flatter his comrades: it is because such was France in 1939, and nobody could describe it any other way without lying'. (*Nouvelle Critique*, May, 1950.)

The basic facts of the class struggle—the 'treachery and stupidity' on the one hand, the 'heroism and clarity of vision' on the other—weld the novel together. It is important to realise this for otherwise

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it seems loosely, even incoherently constructed. As Aragon explained, the characters have not time to develop fully in each number. But once aware of the class struggle in the background we can see how in every case the individual is affected thereby.

Take Cécile (the wife of Fred Wisner, wealthy owner of Wisner motors), a basically honest and sensitive person, who is suddenly brought up against the realities of life when her social circle show a burst of anti-communist hatred:

At a cocktail party somebody produces a copy of the illegal *Humanité*: '. . . a dirty piece of paper, typed, but very badly, grey; it was passed from hand to hand. "What is it"? cried Suzanne in her high-pitched voice. The men were pressing round Mme Landor who had first taken it. All of a sudden Cécile saw them; she didn't know what it was all about, but she saw them—those faces, the curiosity, the kind of cruel joy, the scorn too, the triumph. She saw Fred's face, altered as by the click of a camera—an unknown Fred, violent, full of hatred . . .'

Later we read: 'She couldn't remember when and how she had first had the revelation—Fred, like her father, like nearly all her acquaintances were horrible people. Completely inhuman people. Without kindness. Whose outward appearance was false. Handsome, well-kept, tidy. With dirty souls. Capable of anything. If anyone had told her Fred was a thief she would have believed it, unsurprised'.

Cécile's development is one of the chief threads running through the book. Our interest and sympathy are held by the story of her growing estrangement from Fred and her love for Jean de Moncey, a young, middle-class student. He, like her, is groping towards daylight, stumbling into unfortunate affairs through sheer unhappiness, trying to find a reason for things. The moving scene where Cécile realises the existence of her maid as a human being (while Fred treats her as an automaton) and drives her out to visit her wounded brother at the front, and that of Jean sitting up making soup for the dying prostitute, Sylviane, show these two as individuals who have yet to be brought into contact with reality and with the progressive movement which alone will bring meaning to their empty lives. One hopes that this contact will occur as one of the major developments of the book, for Cécile is a thoroughly sympathetic and living person.

In contrast to these bewildered bourgeois, optimism and confidence permeate the characters of the Communists on the scene. There is a whole gallery of them: Guillaume Vallier, who when

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called up leaves his young wife to be looked after by his party branch (the branch meeting is one of the most moving episodes in the book); Raoul Blanchard, explaining the German-Soviet pact to his workmates; his wife, distributing illegal literature, and commenting on the phoney war: 'The war? Ah! the war has a broad back! They are revenging themselves for '36, that's all. I tell you, they've lost their heads—because they thought they were going to swallow the Party in one mouthful. . .'

With the changes in the situation, the human personalities and relationships evolve and change: Felzner, the convinced, clear-headed militant, who is just about to be separated from his wife—their married life is strained by his absences on party work—is ordered to go underground; in this situation they become reconciled, and go into 'illegality' together (again, a very moving episode, with a most delightful picture of the gang of Felzner children and others playing Red Indians). Lebecq, the little bank clerk, after the first moments of doubt and 'frousse', once drawn into activity, throws himself into his work and shows unexpected stoicism when arrested and manhandled by Daladier's police thugs. Marguerite Corvisart, 45-years-old unmarried daughter of an invalid mother, lawyer's shorthand typist, a devoted but inconspicuous party member, finds herself in September, 1939, one of the only members of the branch left, taking the initiative and courageously inspiring the others in the dangerous work of producing the underground newspapers and leaflets.

Two contrasting types of intellectual are Armand Barbentane and Patrice Orfilat. Aragon gets right inside the skin of both: Orfilat, with a superficial theoretical basis, and no experience of mass work, falls by the wayside at the time of the Soviet pact with Hitler. The betrayal is a brilliant piece of psychology: he tries to convince himself by a tortuous mental process that he is acting rightly in denying the pact, in averting his eyes when the comrade selling *Humanité* is beaten up—and the climax comes when he tries to justify himself to Felzner, and is sent packing with a brusque 'Va-t-en'! Barbentane, equally unused to mass work, but much sounder as a person, goes though the humiliating experience, so common to middle-class comrades, of finding himself among non-communist workers and being at a loss how to get into contact with them, full of qualms and remorse about his bourgeois background: 'While a worker's whole energy is directed against the class enemy, with a man like Armand, all the time some of his strength is turned against something in himself, something *of* himself which obscurely survives and which he

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hates, or is afraid of not hating enough. . .' Where to begin to contact these people? How to get confidence? ' He feels crushed by the enormous task of explanation which he ought to tackle. Up against such confusion one would have to begin at the very beginning, go back to scratch for the smallest detail. . .'

We are waiting for the development of Armand Barbentane in the coming volumes. Most of the others show in the first three parts already that enrichening of their personalities through political activity and understanding that is one of the main features of the book. The persecution, foreshadowed in part 1, becomes a reality in part 2 and in part 3 produces its counterpart in the shape of illegal work, new life, new activity, and the characters change accordingly. It has been said that with Balzac, financial capital is the visible-invisible centre, with Tolstoy it is the exploited peasant, with Gorki the Russian worker in revolt. And though Aragon would possibly not claim a place aloft with these giants, he fulfils the conditions given above. In his case, the visible-invisible all-pervading element is the communist movement, the class-conscious workers, basis of France's salvation in the terrible years described.

There are peculiarities in *Les Communistes*; bourgeois critics will complain that the characterisation is sketchy, will be irritated with the colloquial non-stop flow of thought and conversation (there is little or no descriptive writing); the quicksilver cinema-like effect of the novel. If they do not grasp the implicit basic thought—and it may not be easy for them—they cannot easily grasp the fact that this lightning method, newsreel-like, is what is needed to dart about the whole field of society which is what Aragon sets out to cover. The somewhat breathless staccato rhythm of his conveys better than any elegance of style the atmosphere of those hectic, uneasy days; in fact it recaptures it for those of us who lived through them. If Aragon is charged with formlessness he can console himself with the thought that Paul Bourget criticised *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace* as ' reports which could be continued without end, and in which events followed each other without gradation, without plan, each scene equalling every other in significance. . .' another good example of not seeing the wood for the trees.

Some day Aragon's work will be universally appreciated; in the meantime it is left to the working-class readers and their progressive allies in the bourgeoisie to see what he has done. As Maurice Thorez said to the 12th Party Congress: ' To the decadent art of the bourgeois æsthetes we have opposed an art that will be understood by the working class, an art that will aid it in its struggle for emancipa-

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tion. . . Let us pay special tribute to Aragon and his book *Les Communistes'*.

An English translation (if anyone has the courage to put into English anything so profoundly and untranslatably French as Aragon's Parisian factory workers and typists, his mechanics and midinettes) would be valuable to us politically as well as culturally. In these days when peace is again threatened, when witch hunts are the fashion, when throughout the U.S.A. and the British Empire progressives and militants are being persecuted for their views, it ought to be possible for English-speaking workers to read this story of their French comrades' stand against alarm and despondency—it could not fail to be a tonic and an inspiration to us all.

FILMS AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

PETER SUTTON

FILMS always ought to be discussed, but the films shown in Britain today need very special discussion and very special examination. Most of them seriously threaten working class traditions, the class consciousness of the workers and their ability to fight for a decent future.

There are two types of film. The film which is shown to mass audiences in cinemas and the film which is made for specialist audiences and is usually shown to these audiences on 16 mm. projectors in factories, schools, halls and the like. For convenience we will call the first type of film the popular film and the second type the specialist film. In this country there are about 28,000,000 attendances every week to see popular films, about 15,000,000 attendances annually to see specialist films. The population of the world provides about 300,000,000 attendances weekly at popular film shows; the world audience for specialist films has not yet been estimated though it is believed that the Research Unit at Film Centre in London is collecting the necessary statistics.

Films are the most concentrated propaganda instrument in the world today. Outside the socialist countries this instrument, like the Press, is owned and controlled by a few hundred individuals, responsible to no one, but reflecting through their films the views of

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the ruling class which stands for fascism and war, for ignorance, poverty and mass unemployment—a gangster class. Dominating this group is the influence of Hollywood and the men who control Hollywood in Wall Street. Thus American films, because they influence, subtly and with infinite variety, millions of people every week, become an important means whereby the American Government 'sells' its policy to the world. British, French and Italian films perform, in general, a similar service for the ruling classes of these countries, being less reactionary only to the extent that the working class movement under Communist leadership is stronger than it is in America.

The films of the 'free' world, but particularly the films of America, prepare the way and put the case for a third world war. It isn't always a case directly put, but films of gangsterdom, pornography, and despair as surely play their part as open war films in the business of brutalising, dehumanising, deceiving and de-nationalising the populations of countries earmarked by America as cannon-fodder in the next war. Such is the rôle of *Night and the City, The Set-up,* the British films *The Third Man* and *State Secret,* such is the rôle of *Sands of Iwo-Jima.*

Sands of Iwo Jima was made with the co-operation, one might almost say the sponsorship, of the American Government. Miss C. A. Lejeune, film critic of the London *Observer,* writing on July 2 under the headline, 'Playing with War', described it as 'less of a picture than a portent'. 'There are going to be a great many more films like *Sands of Iwo Jima*', she wrote, and found herself drawn unwillingly to the conclusion that 'war is wonderful, Hollywood seems to suggest'. In other words, this is a war film, glorifying war, part of a larger programme of war films yet to come, part of a propaganda campaign inspired by the American Government, aimed at the common people of the world and the destruction of Peace.

We could have progressive films in Britain if the views of cinemagoers were expressed strongly enough in support of progressive filmmakers, in actions against reactionary films, and if the fight for Peace grew many times stronger. This goes for specialist films as much as popular films. The British Documentary Movement, although it has always been, in effect, a propaganda instrument of the Government and Big Business, although today many of its productions are no less reactionary than the worst popular films, is also by a peculiar contradiction, the most solidly progressive section of the film industry. Its early films were films of social criticism; it

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decisively influenced popular British films made during the war against fascism, greatest and most creative period in the history of the British film industry; it developed a tradition of British film art, in opposition to the influence of America, as clearly defined and as peculiarly national as the film art of any other country; it offers today the possibility of making films which put the working class point of view.

John Grierson, founder and leading theoretician of the movement, once described the documentary film as 'the creative treatment of actuality'. It is a type of film first developed in the Soviet Union and the U.S.A., now widely used as a medium of information in schools, factories, halls and other places where films can be shown outside the cinema. In the Soviet Union 'documentary' has remained the technique of recording in film, critically and in a creative manner, the lives of Soviet people and aspects of Soviet society. Hence it is linked with and influences the news reel. In Britain, however, and in other capitalist countries, notably Canada, 'documentary' has become a term often used to embrace all kinds of specialist film—scientific films, educational films, technical instructional films—almost everything in fact except newsreels and news magazines. This is no accidental development. It reflects the gradual retreat of the documentary film makers to 'safe' subjects in the face of an increasingly reactionary Government home and foreign policy to which many of them could not subscribe. It was not a very courageous method of opposition but it was and is the course which many took rather than follow those who sold out and made the films the Government and the monopolies demanded or, what would be worse, identify themselves with the filth of the newsreels.

To understand better the position of the documentary movement and its films—films whose influence is much greater than the relative size of the popular and specialist film audience would seem to indicate—it is necessary to review briefly the economic basis of the specialist film industry. The movement began in 1929 with the making of Grierson's film *Drifters* under the ægis of the Empire Marketing Board. Later the General Post Office took over where E.M.B. left off and Big Business was not slow in appreciating the value of the new type of film. Hence the economic basis of the movement has always been one of patronage, the patronage of rich monopolies like Shell and I.C.I., of marketing and propaganda organisations like the Tea Bureau which sponsored *Song of Ceylon*, of the Government and, now, of the Boards of nationalised industries like Coal and Transport.

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Within the framework of capitalism it was almost inevitable that documentary should develop in this way. The mistake made by Grierson and the other documentary leaders (most of whom have not yet come to regard their art as merely a money-making venture and still try to maintain their own integrity) lies not in their acceptance and use of capitalist patronage but that they failed to develop any corresponding, *consistent* campaign to win the support and confidence of the organised working class. Hence no working class film movement developed out of what they were doing and out of the experience they were gaining as makers of prestige films for capitalism. This failure is reflected in their films—*Drifters, Song of Ceylon, Housing Problems,* to name three of the most famous—which have always shown an excessive preoccupation with form at the expense of content. Social-democracy—the inability to link what they were doing with the class struggle being fought out in society—was and remains dominant among them and is the reason why documentary films in the post-war period, films like *Waverley Steps, Five Towns, Report on Steel, Hill Sheep Farm,* have lost their early vigour and critical approach, being rightly regarded by the workers as spokesmen, sometimes boring spokesmen, however unwilling, of the boss and State machine.

Sporadic efforts have been made by individual documentary workers and by documentary film units to establish closer links with organised Labour. Miners (issues of *Mining Review*), engineers (*Unity is Strength*), electricians (*A Power in the Land*), post-office workers (*Sorting It Out*) and other unions have sponsored films or been associated with the making of films—some of them extremely bad—which should be seen by everyone because they are *Trade Union* films. But these contacts have not been developed and the failure of even the most progressive sections of the Labour movement, perhaps discouraged by lifeless productions, fully to appreciate the importance of the new medium, while it is served as an alibi for the film makers, is mainly attributable to the inability of the latter to understand the need for such contacts as a means of countering the dangers inherent in their economic position and as something essential to their work as artists.

The reluctance of Right-Wing Labour to develop the use of progressive films, particularly of documentary films, is understandable. The possibility exists of building, in spite of them, a powerful, progressive film organisation in the service of British workers, comparable with that maintained today by French and Italian workers.

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Already the basis is laid in the increasing number of film shows up and down the country sponsored by working class organisations. There are several hundred films immediately available which are suitable for use in such programmes, films running from ten minutes to an hour or more in length. These films are to be found in the Central Film Library, the library of the National Film Association, certain commercial libraries and the libraries of the embassies of foreign countries, particularly the Soviet Union and the New Democracies.

These possibilities face the documentary movement and all film workers with a choice which must be made. Documentary, like any other art, which is and wishes to remain creatively alive, is bound to tell the truth above all else. Under capitalism, therefore, it cannot without distortion be other than a social critic, a critic of the sharpest kind, inevitably more direct, evoking a more immediate and popular response than other art forms. Capitalism, by patronage, blunted the edge of this weapon; the Labour leadership achieved the same end by ignoring it. But the contradiction between the needs of documentary as an art form and its economic basis remains and today has reached so acute a stage that its resolution in one form or another, for or against the working class, can no longer be postponed.

Either the documentary movement continues to accept the limitations of its economic basis, or part of it at least—that part of it which is not yet under the control of Rank, Pathé and the like—breaks loose from these limitations to root itself firmly in the mass organisations of the people whatever the temporary hardships and difficulties involved. The issue is not yet decided. The final choice depends not only upon the internal struggle waged by the most progressive section of the documentary workers but even more upon a greater use of the films available and upon the support, encouragement, active criticism and intelligent understanding of the progressive sections of the organised working class in the Trade Unions, the Co-operatives, and Co-operative Film Societies, the Labour and Communist Parties and the Youth Leagues. The creative ability which made the great documentaries of the war and pre-war period is stifled but not dead. It needs only to be developed in causes worthier than the wage-freeze and anti-Soviet war.

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Book Reviews

THE WRITER AND HIS RESPONSIBILITIES

Selected Philosophical Works. By V. G. Belinsky. (552 pp., Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow; Collet's, London, 10*s.* 6*d.*)

WE have long wanted to know more of the man whom Lenin and Stalin have numbered among the great teachers and makers of the Russian people, and whose 'tremendous living significance' (Lenin) is attested by the numerous references to him in modern Soviet writing. This volume contains a translation of Belinsky's most important articles and letters, and gives us a most welcome opportunity of assessing his work. Incidentally, the translation is somewhat clumsy, but let that pass.

Belinsky lived from 1811 to 1848. It was the period of the first blossoming of Russian literature. Pushkin and Lermontov were a little his seniors, Gogol and Goncharov his exact contemporaries, Herzen his friend. He saw the early work of Turgeniev and Dostoievsky and Tolstoy began to write three years after his early death. A man of great intelligence and sensitivity, he clearly detected the quality of the great writers of his time and championed them against the great mass of obscurantist and trivial nigglers. But the greatness of his achievement is not due to any sort of 'pure' æsthetic sensibility; he derided 'art for art's sake' as the product of intellectuals cut off from social activity. He saw in art the means by which a nation grows conscious of itself and grasps more firmly 'its sense of human dignity'. He quite rightly saw that the great writers of his time were engaged in fact and by implication in a struggle for human rights against the oppression, the 'dirt and refuse' of centuries. His own work is its theoretical counterpart and was looked upon as such by his contemporaries. He wrote to Gogol: 'The public is right, for it looks upon Russian writers as its only leaders, defenders and saviours against Russian autocracy, orthodoxy and nationalism'. His whole work was a dire struggle against reaction, and only his premature death saved him from rotting in prison. Nine years after his death Aksakov wrote that there was not a single high-school teacher who did not know Belinsky's *Letter to Gogol* off by heart.

Belinsky's literary criticism has often been derided as semi-political publicism. But it arose in the closest sympathy with the greatest modern Russian literature, it was part of this creative movement, like the criticism of Leasing and Herder in Germany. It is evidently far more important than the subtle analyses of modern bourgeois critics, which have no creative function precisely because they fail to understand the principle of Belinsky's work, namely, that poetry and life are intertwined, that poetry is service to humanity, and is concerned to reveal the powers and purposes of the particular historical situations.

Belinsky's span of life was short, and during the period of his maturity he went through a considerable development. He began as an idealist, adopting Hegel's dialectical metaphysics as the formula of his belief in, and desire for, progress. He then linked up with the Young-Hegelians, the associates of the early Marx, with their doctrine of action and criticism. In his last years he became a convinced materialist: 'To hell with metaphysics. . . To rid science of the ghosts of transcendentalism and theology, to show the precincts of the intellect within which its activity is fruitful, and deliver it once and for all from the clutches of the fantastic and mystical—that is what the founder of the new philosophy will accomplish'. This was what, at that very moment (1847), unknown to Belinsky, Marx and Engels were doing.

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Belinsky's philosophical development runs parallel to his social thought. He believed ardently in the powers of man to master nature and the past, and recognised that progress is a matter of continual effort. Thus he threw himself heart and soul into the movements of reform in Russia, against the autocracy, serfdom, the knout, orthodoxy, and all forms of reaction. As he developed he recognised more and more the historical determinants of progress. From the beginning he attacked romantic nationalism, which opposed all Western innovations and idealised the muzhik, the 'bearded merchant', and all feudal institutions; he insisted that true national character could only come into being through change and development; but he also attacked that idealistic perfectionism which failed to define the real tasks of the moment. His visit to Germany in 1847 brought him face to face with conditions which did not exist in Russia, for in Silesia he saw the modern proletariat in all its misery, the capitalist bourgeoisie, and from Herzen he learned of the corruption of bourgeois France. He had earlier expressed his sympathy for the ideas of the Utopian French socialists, and now more clearly saw the lineaments of future social progress. 'The bourgeoisie in struggle and the bourgeoisie in triumph *(militans* and *triumphans)* are different things. . . Woe to the state which is in the hands of the capitalists'. In this last year of his life he links up with those Russian intellectual leaders like Herzen and Tolstoy who, in their clear insight into, and savage contempt for capitalist society broke the soil in which socialism was to grow. Belinsky lived and died too early to win to clarity; but recognising the progressive power of the new forces of production, steam engines and railroads, etc., and the reactionary capitalist relations of production, he was a worthy forerunner of the great Russian opponents of 'flabby and submissive Liberalism'. (Lukacs.)

These philosophical and social principles guided him in his literary criticism; and it is of the greatest significance that they led him to recognise the quality of Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol, about whose literary supremacy there is today no argument. That is, his general attitude was a means to true æsthetic evaluation. The dialectic in his thinking allowed him to define periods in the history of Russian literature, represented for example by Lomonosov or Karamsin, in which a new situation and new problems demanded new forms of expression, a new literary language. His famous articles on Pushkin's *Onegin* state the thesis that this work is a 'historical poem' and therefore of universal value: that is, it is a realistic, contemporary work and because of this penetrates to truth; it is deeply Russian, and therefore a treasured possession of all peoples. But poetic realism is not, in Belinsky's view, mere exact reproduction of actual circumstances. Pushkin has chosen his persons and his theme (an apparently insignificant love-story) from a particular class, and the value of his poem derives from the importance of this class, the landed nobility created by Peter the Great's reforms, 'which, in its mode of life and customs, is most representative (in the Russia of the 1820s) of progress and intellectual movement'. The greatness of Pushkin's poem depends on the significance of this class, and, accepting its significance, Pushkin describes it in all its truth, tenderly, satirically, humorously, in the living language it used. Pushkin is truly Russian, not turning to some idealised past or some indifferent aspect of the present, but grasping intuitively the elements of human and social progress in Russia—'Pushkin is a representative of a newly awakened social consciousness'.

This profound grasp of æsthetic realism, as different from reactionary antiquarianism as from trivial naturalism, is equally evident in

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Belinsky's appreciation of Gogol. Gogol's realistic satire of Russian backwardness, the bureaucracy, the landowners, serfdom, had, of course, in the generation following Pushkin, a clear political bearing. Belinsky was one of his most ardent champions, and never failed to point out the artistic excellence of his work. The artist, he writes, must at all times penetrate to the central problems of his epoch, 'to the general and necessary'; and in his own day 'art and literature have more than ever before become the expression of social problems'. Beauty arises from the presentation of those aspects of reality, depraved and beast-like as it may be, in which the whole social and spiritual problem of an epoch is embodied. Belinsky recognises that the artist often works unconsciously, through imagination and intuition. Gogol himself, becoming conscious of the philosophical and social implications of his work, renounced it, burnt the second volume of *Dead Souls*, and fled into the arms of authority and backwardness. Belinsky's famous *Letter to Gogol*, his testament, is a noble protest against Gogol's defamation of art as well as his renunciation of humanism. 'I loved you', he writes, because you were 'one of Russia's great leaders on its path to consciousness, development and progress'. But because you have come to live in a 'beautiful far-away', you have forgotten that what the people need is not mysticism, prayers, and sermons, but 'rights and laws conforming with commonsense and justice'. You have contributed to making Russia 'aware of herself'; but now you would fool and bemuse the people. You have deserted humanity, and art as well. 'Who would have thought that the turgid and squalid bombast (of your latest book) was the work of the author of *The Inspector General* and *Dead Souls*?'

Belinsky stands at the beginning of Russian literary criticism; his successors were Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov who develop his principles in an epoch when the character of bourgeois capitalism gave greater precision to his problems. Lukacs has devoted an article to these writers in his *Studies in European Realism*, and the sooner we can have their works translated the better. Belinsky has a number of faults, particularly in his early writings, which are often over-idealistic and somewhat vapid. The Russia in which he lived was still extremely backward, and he had little direct contact with the society of Western Europe, where the more advanced capitalism was already revealing the social and spiritual realities of bourgeois society. There was in Russia at that time no bourgeois movement, no political parties, no modern proletariat; the struggle for human progress seemed to him essentially a struggle of isolated personalities against authority and customary institutions. But the moral strength of his personality, his integrity and courage, his love of humanity, his refusal to compromise with 'dirt and refuse', gave him an insight which is far deeper than any of his European contemporaries, and which, today, we need.

ROY PASCAL.

POPSKI THE PARTISAN

Private Army. By Vladimir Peniakoff ('Popski'). (512 pp. Jonathan Cape, 16*s*.)

Written in a clear, lucid style, easy to read, provocative and amusing, this book has a scope and breadth which takes it far beyond a mere record of the adventures of a small band of men in the last world war. The narrative contains a close observation of detail combined with a deep appreciation of the broader aspects of the war and its impact on the peoples of the Western Desert and Italy. The activities of his comrades and as-

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sociates and the guerilla units are observed and told in a way that presents them as living people, warm and human. The short opening chapters describe the early background of Popski's life and surroundings and show the emergence of a strong and human character, critical and original. It was this strength of character which enabled him to resist the debilitating atmosphere of the European communities in Egypt, upon whom he looked with a mixture of contempt and sympathy. He preferred the simplicity and genuineness of the fellaheen, the peasants, and through his friendship with the Arabs he learned a first-hand knowledge of desert lore.

After early frustrations, Popski was finally accepted by the War Office in October, 1940. The first section of the book concludes with an illuminating description of his first contacts with the war machine and the efforts to form a Libyan Arab Force. Part two, and by far the largest section of the book, deals with the activities of his force in the Tripolitanian desert, in conjunction with the Senussi Arabs. Here his task was to harry the enemy at his own back door, create 'alarm and despondency', and supply intelligence reports to the Eighth Army far to the East. All this he did with such success as to immobilise two divisions of the Nazi Army. These chapters contain stories of the courage, audacity and, at times, sheer impudence of members of his force. The tribesmen of the Senussi co-operated closely in spite of the certainty of a dreadful and lingering death at the hands of the Italian occupation forces. Popski describes in detail the struggles of the Senussis against the Italian invaders since 1912. There was constant guerilla warfare until 1929, when General Graziani, in calculated massacres, destroyed more than half their number. Their agrarian economy was destroyed and the tribe reduced to small pastoral communities. The Emir Idris el Senussi is mentioned from time to time as being the spiritual head of the Senussi. It is interesting to note that this individual reappears after the defeat of the German Army in North Africa in a somewhat less spiritual guise as the puppet ruler of Cyrenaica under British patronage and subsidy. Thus the British Government, in defiance of the United Nations, maintains its authority over Cyrenaica and controls, with America, the airfields and ports in Castel Benito, Benina, Benghazi and Tobruk as part of the Anglo-American strategy in the Middle East in preparation for a third world war. The Senussis are as far from independence as they were under Italian imperialist domination. The later chapters of the book deal with the campaign in Italy. The pace accelerates and the war comes closer as the landscape narrows from the broad sweeps of the desert to hills, valleys and marshes of Italy. The group is in continuous activity and now operating with a much more active force, the Italian partisans. The class nature of the war emerges more sharply and Popski sees the Italian people fighting not only for the defeat of the Nazi Army, but also for the overthrow of fascism in their own country. Their war is also a civil war.

There is much to be gained from this book. As the story of a remarkable man and the exploits of his equally remarkable unit; as a textbook of certain kinds of warfare and for the historical value of his observations of the Arabs and the Italian people. The main lesson of the book, however, is that such a force as P.P.A. cannot operate in occupied territory without the protection and active co-operation of the people of that territory. A unit of this description can only operate on the side of progress. The forces of reaction can never possess such as Popski's Private Army. That Popski

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sees this clearly is evident. He has now joined the ranks of the partisans for Peace.

R. T. F. TURNER

SHAW

A Good Man Fallen Among Fabians. A Study of George Bernard Shaw, by Alick West. (172 pp. Lawrence and Wishart, 9*s.* 6*d.*)

GEORGE Bernard Shaw has ever been a gift to the biographer. The great old man may be thanked for the fact (quite apart from the many other facts that leave us in his debt) that his existence in our midst has founded a minor industry in biographical production.

So far as criticism of his work and actions is concerned, Shaw has always been his own most able critic and the Shavian enthusiast would be wise to pause before delivering himself publicly of some judgment, for as sure as eggs are eggs Shaw has already somewhere, in a pamphlet, preface or play, said it all himself and said it better. Shaw is nothing if not disarming. Speaking of his life in 'Sixteen Self Sketches' he says: 'Things have not happened to me: on the contrary it is I who have happened to them; and all my happenings have taken the form of books and plays. Read them, or spectate them; and you have my whole story. . . .'

In *A Good Man Fallen Among Fabians,* Alick West has taken the positive part of Shaw's advice: he has *read* him, and now tells some major part of the whole story. In the Epilogue to this study he says: 'The purpose of this book has been to study the conflict between Shaw's dramatic vision and his Fabianism; . . .' the conflict that had its beginning at the moment when Shaw, two years after reading Marx's *Capital,* joined the Fabian Society in 1884. In 1882 he had been profoundly affected by his discovery of Marx for he reported: 'From that hour I became a man with some business in the world'. But two years later, Shaw, crammed to the brim with political fervour and revolt against the filth of capitalism, made a deliberate choice and joined the Fabian Society and not the Social-Democratic Federation that were 'quite proletarian in their rank and file'. As Alick West says: 'The Fabians, in consciously organising themselves as middle class intellectuals for the achievement of socialism and distinguishing their organisation from the proletariat, were taking the fundamental decision, of which the later Fabian policy was a consistent expression, that socialism must be brought about without seizure of power by the workers and therefore without struggle against the capitalist class and State'. At its inception the Fabian Society had believed in the imminence of revolution and had frequently combined in action with the Federation, but the failure of this hope had steered their policy not only away from all thought of revolutionary action but towards a hard and fast belief that revolution should not, must not, be. The effect upon Shaw is related by Alick West through the development of thought in the plays that followed the nine years of political apprenticeship. It is the story of a great disappointment, and so accompanied with unceasing conflict and endeavour to resolve fundamental problems that this study of one man's battles and errors reaches, frequently, tragic heights. In later years Shaw was to call Fabianism 'futile', but futile also was belief in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, futile the hope of action to liberate itself in the great anonymous Labour movement. In the plays we see the course of this development of thought. The capitalist, once the blow-fly fattening upon filth, becomes the jungle beast following natural instinct. The working man, once a figure that provoked

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our pity and indignation, becomes a bribable, corrupted mockery. Turning away from romanticism and illusion and the futility of the Fabian outlook, Shaw still cannot see any positive advance in the socialism he had once hoped for. It is this conflict in Shaw that is the purpose of Alick West's study and analysis. The body of Shaw's imaginative work is the case history and, as Shaw himself has said, in it is his story and his life's battle. When the first play was performed its author was startled by the quality and quantity of the laughter it provoked for he had hoped to be taken more seriously. From that day Shaw's position in the public affection has become that of a harmless prophet and a brilliant entertainer, a cynical wise man and a perverse philosopher. Alick West has the gift of all good biographers, he becomes deeply and humanly engaged in and with his subject so that the reader is left with a feeling of having been profoundly moved by this study of ceaseless conflict in a human being so richly endowed and a resolve to re-read Shaw with new interest. This book should encourage many people to take Shaw as seriously as once Shaw intended they should, and in reading it they will find that they are learning something of the British Labour Movement during the last hundred years.

BEATRIX LEHMANN.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

The Socialized Agriculture of the U.S.S.R. Naum Jasny. Geoffrey Cumberledge. 60s. 837 pp.
Marx, His Time and Ours. Rudolf Schlesinger. Routledge & Kegan Paul. 30s. 440 pp.
Studies in European Realism. George Lukacs. Hillway. 21s. 277 pp.
Documents of the Trade Union Conference of Asian and Australasian Countries. 148 pp. All-China Federation of Labour. Central Books Ltd., London. 2s 6d.
Soviet Land and People. N. N. Mikhailov. Soviet News. 120 pp. 1s.
Personnel Management. C. H. Northcott. Pitman. 335 pp. 18s.
London Trades Council. Foreword by J. Jacobs. Lawrence & Wishart. 160 pp. 9s 6d.
Mother and Child Care in the U.S.S.R. O. P. Nogina. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow. Collet's, London. 86 pp. 9d.
Poems from China. Translated by Wong Man. Creation Books, Hongkong. Hirschfield, London. Paper, 7s 6d; cloth, 10s 6d. 241 pp.
The Odds Against Us. Hans Werner Richter. Macgibbon & Kee. 304 pp. 9s 6d.
Fundamental Lessons of the Discovery of Traicho Kostov's Group. Report to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. 61 pp. Collet's, London.
Trade Unions in the New Society. Harold J. Laski. Allen & Unwin. 100 pp. 10s.
The Cinema, 1950 Edit., Roger Manvell. Pelican Books. 224 pp. 2s 6d.
Meaning and Purpose. Kenneth Walker. Penguin Books. 1s 6d. 203 pp.
Inter Allied Reparation Agency: Report of the Secretary-General for the Year 1949. 112 pp.
Non-Self-Governing Territories: Summaries and Analyses of information submitted to the Secretary-General during 1949. United Nations. Vol. I, 254 pp. $2. Vol. II, 676 pp. $4.
Anarchism or Socialism? J. V. Stalin. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, and Collet's, London. 108 pp. 6d.
The Soviet Union and the Korean Question. Documents. Soviet News. 100 pp. 2s.
Marx, Engels: Selected Works, Vols. I and II. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, and Collet's, London. 616 and 484 pp. 6s 6d. per vol.
Trade Unions Today. Henry Collins. Frederick Muller. 142 pp. 6s.
Notes of a School Principal. Ivan Novikov. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, and Collet's, London. 88 pp. 9d.

PAMPHLETS

Reaping The Whirlwind. Don Bateman. Independent Labour Party. 6d. 32 pp.
Africa Fights for Freedom. Alphaeous Hunton. Council on African Affairs, New York. 16 pp. 5 cents.
Fulfilment of the U.S.S.R. State Plan for 1950. Soviet News. 22 pp. One penny.
The Soviet Union at the Polls. Soviet News. 84 pp. 3d.
Peace is Everybody's Business. Ilya Ehrenburg. Soviet News. 16 pp. 1d.
Sixteen Soviet Republics. Soviet News. 96 pp. 1s.
Russia With Our Own Eyes. British Workers' Delegation. 128 pp. 9d.

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'. . . TO SEE THE WORLD'

To help people to see the world, as it is and as it can be, is a great mission for the Magazine of International Labour. Here is a letter we have received from a Scottish girl, now married and overseas, who first met with 'your wonderful *Labour Monthly*' in her new home: 'This dollar which I am enclosing is the one I would have sent to my brother. He died this summer, suffering untold pain from wounds after Dunkirk. Bert was a very brave man. He had been on his back most of those years since then. Whenever I can I will send a dollar in my brother's memory. His death was a great sorrow to me, but it only makes me even more determined in our great fight for peace. The grief and pain and all the miseries of the aftermath of the last war shall never happen again if I can help it. Sometimes it is a hard life out here, but we have such a wonderful goal in sight, so I never allow myself to become discouraged, for the tide is turning and tomorrow's world will be ours'. If we can help people 'to see the world' in time, many lads like Bert in every country will need no other memorial.

As to the fund, 'Socialist Airman' writes: 'So my standing-in for Inverness caused a dust-up among the Scots? Too bad! Well, the Welsh are a fighting people, so as a mere Englishman I'm going to raise their wrath by paying 1s. to stand-in for Merthyr Tydfil. And of course, here's my steady money guarantee of 1s. to keep my own town Taunton in the front line against Yankee aggression'. This month the August fund is

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